

# Net closing in on illegal fishing says Counsel General

A number of prosecutions for illegal fishing activity have been made since January for matters including fishing in a closed area, non submission of statutory information, and illegal cockle and whelk fishing.

The seas around Wales are blessed with a variety of nationally and internationally important species and habitats, protected under European, Welsh and UK law. These natural resources and the services they provide are crucial in helping our coastal communities thrive through fishing and tourism, as well as having important cultural significance.

Unfettered exploitation of resources can lead to unsustainable practices which can result in damage and degradation. That is why the Welsh Government closely regulates fishing, and other activities, in Welsh marine waters. Using a number of assets – including fisheries patrol vessels – Welsh Government marine enforcement officers actively enforce and seek compliance with a wide range of regulations at sea and onshore.

Prosecutions under fisheries legislation in Wales are taken in the name of the Counsel General.

Jeremy Miles said,

“Illegal fishing is damaging to the angling industry, which is worth more than £150m to the Welsh economy. Unrestrained exploitation of resources can lead to unsustainable practices which can degrade fishing stocks and cause damage to local economies.

“Where there is sufficient evidence against those who flout the law, we must take action to protect our seas and wider fishing industry. These latest convictions show that anyone breaking the laws, whether off shore or in the intertidal areas should expect to face prosecution and potentially severe penalties.

“It’s important that we continue to crack down on illegal activity so that it remains sustainable for licensed fisherman.”